

University of Alabama at Birmingham Media Protocols and Guidelines

INFORMATION FOR UAB STUDENTS, FACULTY, STAFF AND VENDORS/CONTRACTORS

The UAB Office of University Relations oversees UAB's public relations functions, including integrated internal and external communications and media relations. A renowned public doctoral research university and academic medical center with a growing campus, vibrant student life, expansive impact in the community and a \$7.15 billion annual economic impact in the state, UAB is committed to the creation and dissemination of knowledge.

University Relations recognizes the importance of the news media to an informed public and works with reporters to communicate significant developments, as well as information about our people, operations and outcomes. We regularly communicate about how our students, faculty, staff, alumni and supporters are advancing all areas of our mission: education, health care, research, community service and economic development. In addition, Athletic Communications works with news media to communicate information specific to UAB Athletics.

The following protocols and guidelines are intended to support the important work happening throughout the UAB community and facilitate constructive interactions with the news media:

UAB Faculty and Staff Contact With the Media

University Relations is UAB's designated contact point for the news media and is the source of official information about the university — including the central/traditional campus and the Health System. The exception is the UAB Athletic Department communications; Athletic Communications coordinates with the media for Athletic Department-specific stories. With the exception of athletic-specific communications, University Relations is responsible for all proactive media outreach, and University Relations should be made aware of all incoming media inquiries and requests.

Faculty and staff members who wish to initiate contact with the news media, or who receive news media inquiries, should contact University Relations and take advantage of its expertise and resources.

Incoming Media Requests: In order to accommodate a timely response to media inquiries/interview requests of UAB faculty, staff or students, University Relations should be notified immediately of the outreach. Some faculty, staff and students prefer to first notify the communications director in their school, department or service line. That is an approved practice; communications directors alert and coordinate with University Relations.

During business hours, call University Relations at 205-934-3884. After business hours, call UAB Paging at 205-934-2599 and ask for the media specialist on call.

UAB regularly receives and responds to media inquiries directed to University Relations. We ask that students, faculty and staff contacted by University Relations staff respond as

quickly as they are able with their availability or information needed to respond in a timely manner.

Proactive Media Outreach: University Relations staff responsible for media outreach (www.uab.edu/news/contact) work to identify and cultivate UAB news stories across campus and beyond, and use many methods (e.g., news releases, videos, social media, news conferences and direct pitches) to encourage external media coverage. If you have a story you would like to see pitched, request publicity using the online form found at www.uab.edu/reporter/request-publicity.

Academic Freedom, Faculty and University Spokespeople

When public comment on behalf of the university is requested, an appropriate spokesperson will be identified by University Relations and senior leadership. Faculty enjoy academic freedom and are encouraged to discuss topics related to their areas of academic expertise, but no one is permitted to speak on behalf of the institution or interpret UAB policy unless designated as a spokesperson.

Faculty and staff are asked to remember that, in responding to the media, they can be seen as representing and speaking for the university. Personal opinions should be clearly and carefully identified as such. Issues that should not be discussed with reporters by faculty and staff include: legal issues, personnel issues, questions that involve university integrity (e.g., ethics or issues that may result in harm to others), private student or patient information protected by federal law, or a campus crisis or emergency. Please consult with University Relations regarding all inquiries that meet these criteria.

Federal Privacy Laws

UAB is obligated by federal laws to protect the privacy of our students and UAB Medicine patients. Faculty and staff should be familiar with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) (www.ed.gov/policy/gen/guid/fpco/ferpa/index.html) and the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) (www.hhs.gov/ocr/privacy/hipaa/understanding/). Beyond the law, we ask that faculty and staff be respectful of the privacy of others in the UAB community. These expectations extend to UAB partners, including vendors and contractors, research or community partners, and those organizations that work with UAB in emergency management/response.

Vendors, Contractors and Partners

Organizations that do business with or partner with UAB should route any multi-media communications or media materials, and vet planned media outreach/communications plans that involve or mention UAB to University Relations for approval prior to use or contacting the media. UAB faculty and staff should not route a contract for signature by an authorized UAB signatory that requires public communication or publicity without University Relations approval.

Vendors, contractors and partners wishing to conduct a photo or video shoot on campus must

obtain University Relations approval. It is recommended for vendors to work through their project point-of-contact (e.g., a school, department or service line communications director) to contact University Relations and obtain necessary approvals. Athletic Communications has the authority to approve and oversee shoots specific to athletics and works with University Relations when those shoots occur on campus outside of UAB Athletics venues (e.g., inside academic buildings).

News Conferences

University Relations is the only on-campus entity granted the authority to call and hold news conferences on behalf of the university. Such news conferences typically are held only for major university announcements. News conferences are convened as a way to efficiently share important news with the media. Athletics Communications may convene news conferences on matters related to intercollegiate athletics. Anyone (including UAB faculty, staff, students, or outside individuals or entities) who would like to request permission or discuss the protocol for calling a news conference should inquire with University Relations staff.

Submitting a News Tip or Requesting Publicity/Assistance

University Relations works regularly with student, faculty and staff to publicize the work and accomplishments of the UAB community. If you would like to submit a news tip or request publicity assistance (including external communications like media outreach and social media, and internal communication distributions such as the eReporter faculty/staff newsletter and Greenmail, our student newsletter), please fill out the form found at www.uab.edu/reporter/request-publicity with all pertinent details.

Crisis/Emergency Communications

In the event of a crisis or emergency on campus, it is essential that UAB disseminate timely, accurate information and ensure that inquiries are routed to the appropriate sources. University Relations is responsible for the development and dissemination of all university communications in the event of a campus emergency. This includes internal communications with students, faculty and staff, as well as communications with the media. The priority will be on maintaining timely and open communications, and providing complete and accurate information that has been confirmed. To access University Relations in an emergency, page the media specialist on call.

Questions/Inquiries Contact UAB Public Relations

- Questions and Inquiries
 - University Relations: 205-934-3884
 - Director of External Public Relations Tyler Greer, tgreer@uab.edu, 205-934-2041
 - UAB Medicine and Health-related Schools Public Relations Manager Bob Shepard, bshep@uab.edu, 205-934-8934
 - Central/Traditional Academic Campus Public Relations Manager Alicia Rohan, arohan@uab.edu, 205-975-7515

- Page on-call University Relations media specialist: Call 205-934-2599 and ask for the media specialist on call
 - Athletic Communications: 205-934-0722
- In an emergency: Call 205-934-2599 and ask for the media specialist on call
- Request Publicity or Submit a News Tip (to request internal UAB and/or external publicity): <http://www.uab.edu/reporter/request-publicity>